



Bushfire Recovery & Resilience Grant Projects

Bellingen's Bushfire Recovery and Resilience funds are delivering local community driven programs, projects and initiatives that will strengthen our capacity to meet the challenges we will face in the years ahead.

So, here is a quick snapshot of two projects that will make a real difference in our community by teaching us how to care for our natural environment and how to grow fresh food at home.

The Regional Food Loop - Seeds of Sustainability

Project: **Backyard Growing Workshops & Cooking Demonstrations**

The Bellingen Farmers & Producers Markets, in partnership with Harry Campbell of Lush Landscapes Permaculture, will deliver six practical workshops focusing on how to grow fresh food in your backyard and four seasonal cooking demonstrations.

The workshops and demonstrations will be held at the Bellingen Farmers and Producers Market to inspire and educate people how to use local, seasonal foods in their everyday life.

Louise Hensby from the Regional Food Loop said the workshops and demonstrations have been designed to cultivate the seeds for a stronger future, a healthier and more robust community, so stay tuned for dates to be announced on the Bellingen Farmers Markets Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/bellingenfarmersandproducersmarket/>

Dandarrga Landcare and Dorrigo Seeds Savers

Dandarrga Landcare and Dorrigo Seeds Savers will deliver a series of informative and practical community workshops and presentations on topics including food seed saving, Dorrigo Plateau forest ecology and native propagation and regenerative land use.

Grant funds received will also be used to upgrade Dandarrga Landcare's communal kitchen and common areas, and to renovate their shade houses and purchase equipment for the nursery.

Dandarrga Landcare Nursery & Project Coordinator, Annie Stanton said they were delighted to receive funding and that with the help of volunteers, these funds would help provide a safe and friendly community space to share information and perform seed processing and propagation activities.

Dates and times for Dandarrga's workshops and presentations will be announced over the coming months, so make sure you keep an eye on their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/Dandarrgalandcare/>

Climate Emergency Update

The development of a Community Climate Plan is the next step in Bellingen Shire Council's Climate Emergency Response. This collaborative plan will address how the community can build resilience to the consequences of our changing climate based on the state government's science-based projections. Register to Council's online community engagement hub to keep up to date with opportunities to be involved: <https://create.bellingen.nsw.gov.au/>



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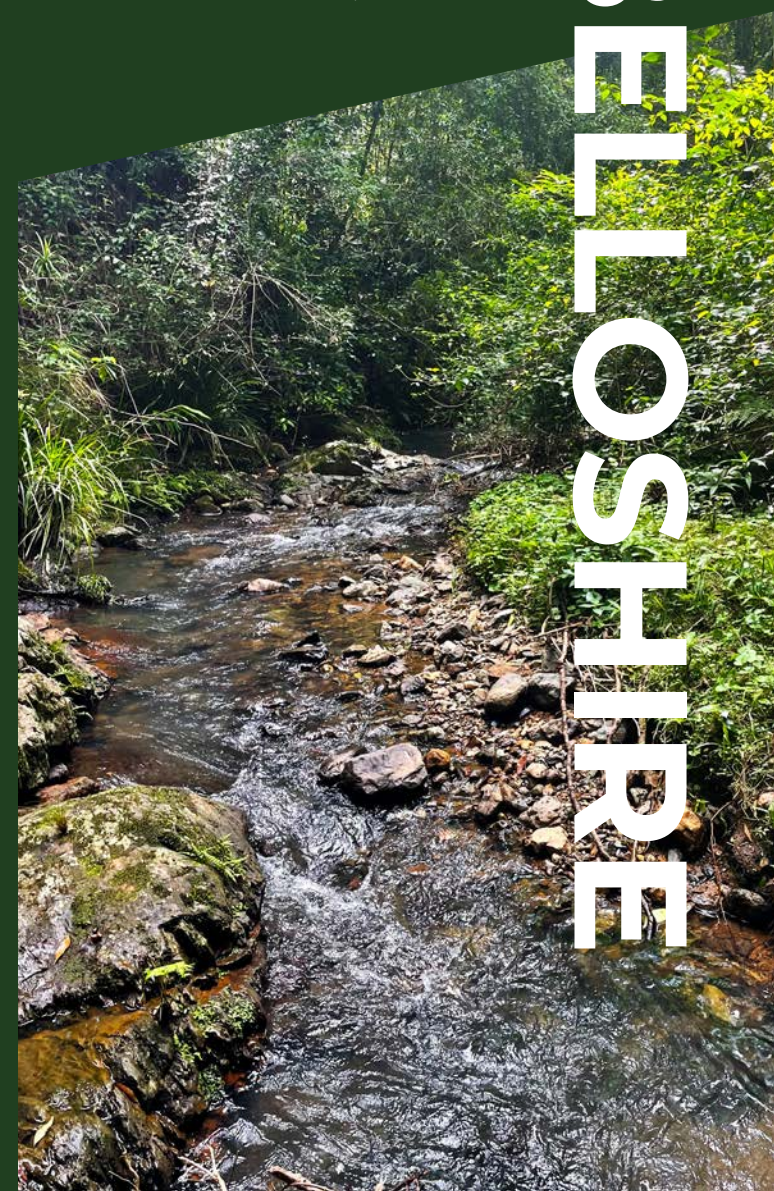


AUTUMN 2021

“BUILDING ON
OUR CONNECTED
COMMUNITY”



BELLINGEN SHIRE





Local & Vocal Voice at National Assembly

I will be attending the Australian Local Government Association's National General Assembly of Local Government in Canberra later this year because I want the Federal Government to know about the challenges we face as a community due to the recent drought, fires, floods and current COVID-19 pandemic.

The 'local and vocal' message I want to deliver is that we need to develop a national policy that will immediately and effectively fund local community driven programs, projects and initiatives that will strengthen our capacity to meet the challenges we will face in the years ahead.

So that's why I will be calling on the Federal Government to release the \$4 billion in unallocated Emergency Response Funds to the 537 Local Councils across our nation to fund local community disaster recovery, preparedness and resilience initiatives.

That's because there needs to be a discussion regarding the challenges we face as a community, such as our Shire's housing crisis and issues relating to affordable housing availability, and the need to develop and fund community driven short, medium and long-term strategies to deliver a proactive response to the National homelessness issue.

The significant increase in the scale and cost of maintaining and repairing our community infrastructure, including the challenges faced by many Councils across the country that are trying to manage the impacts of severe weather events and flooding on their road and bridge networks also needs to be explored.

Our local environment has also suffered greatly, and the need to develop a national policy that delivers initiatives that address the impacts of climate change and these extreme weather events, including the need to fund local environmental recovery initiatives that address the water and food security crisis affecting all of our local communities needs to be on the agenda.

The challenges our local businesses face also requires Federal funding to establish local community partnership-based models that harnesses the talents of locals and community organisations, and the future direction of practical initiatives that will provide long-term solutions to the economic impacts they will face in the years ahead must be considered.

Ultimately, these funds could be invested immediately to strengthen every local community's capacity to establish foundational programs that would make a real difference by preparing our Nation's communities for the challenges they face now and into the future, and I look forward to advocating on your behalf for that to happen.

Cr Dominic King
Mayor, Bellingen Shire.



Endangered Bellingen Turtles Make a Snappy Recovery

Re-introduced populations of the Bellinger River Snapping Turtle have once again made themselves at home in our local river system, thanks to the collaborative efforts of Bellingen Shire Council and our Shire's Bellinger Riverwatch and Landcare volunteers.

Bellingen Shire Council Mayor, Cr Dominic King, said the Bellinger Riverwatch Project had previously received \$5,000 from our Shire's Environmental Levy Community Fund Grant Program to monitor and care for the health of the Bellinger and Kalang Rivers.

"The project was led by 25 local community volunteers and five schools, which collected monthly water quality data to develop an evidence-based approach towards monitoring river system health and support conservation actions for endangered species".

Cr King said Bellinger Riverwatch volunteers research data had also contributed to a multi-agency response to a 2015 mortality event, where 90% of the estimated 4,500 snapping turtles living in the Bellinger River were wiped out by a virus within six weeks.

"In May 2019, thanks to the collaborative efforts of Council's Sustainability Team, the NSW Government, Bellinger Riverwatch volunteers and Taronga Zoo staff, Snapping Turtles from the zoo's captive breeding program were successfully re-introduced into our river system".

Cr King said more than thirty Bellinger River Snapping Turtles had also been recently released to add to the local population of this critically endangered species.

"This is a fantastic outcome and this community led project is a perfect example of why Council will continue to invest in community groups and projects that deliver positive environmental and sustainability outcomes for our Shire".